

Guidelines for Doing Good Grief Work

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- * **Be faithful to your healing task** – don't run away or arrange too many distractions; trust yourself to be able to do your grief work well.
- * **Allow and honor your feelings** – your healing will be found at the heart of the whole huge unspeakably intense and disorderly jumble of them all.
- * **Be willing to give expression to your feelings** – recall that as Mr. Rogers said, "Anything human is mentionable, and anything mentionable is manageable."
- * **Take particularly good care of yourself** – grief is messy, confusing, and exhausting, and you need and deserve your own best comfort, support and patience as you move through it.
- * **Seek the help of other people** – the support of a few, trusted others can add energy, strength and insight.
- * **Be forgiving of those who don't understand** – others may need your help to understand what you're experiencing and what you need, and may themselves be paralyzed by their powerlessness to diminish your pain.
- * **Stay in touch with your strengths and your integrity** – look to your deep and subtle gifts as you redefine yourself, and be sensitive to the fact that an attitude of victimization will just compound and complicate your distress.
- * **Understand that your grief will have its own unique timing, rhythms and cycles** – working as best you can with "just right now," rather than "what it should be" will help you reclaim your grounding and wholeness.
- * **Realize your own power in the face of trauma** – an "I can" attitude to compliment your flexibility can alert you to your real and invaluable internal resources and deepen your sense of resilience, helping you to remember your power and personal choice can never be taken from you.
- * **Recall with compassion that grief is a universal human experience** – while honoring your own unique process. Know that loss is part of the shared mystery of all of our lives, and that you are not now, or ever alone.
- * **Be curious about what can be learned** – facing the seemingly impossible can be a source of deep healing and transformation; be prepared, in fact, to discover some remarkably good things about yourself.
- * **Look for opportunities to carry forth a fitting legacy** – realize that death does not end a relationship, and that what you treasure in your loved one can be supported, nurtured, and celebrated such that your bond is continued in countless creative ways.
- * **Be willing to experience the reconciliation that is your healing** – be mindful that, though you don't control life, you can work through this unimaginably tremendous challenge and continue to learn, and to flourish, and to love living again.

